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ABSTRACT

A 1985-1986 case study of governance conducted at Rikkyo University, a private university in Tokyo, is considered, along with weaknesses in the organizational framework of governance and how these organizational weaknesses are linked to problems in reforming Japanese higher education. The governance structure provides that each college of a private university have an academic senate composed of faculty to decide academic matters. Since Rikkyo University has six colleges, it also has six separate senates, and with each college acting independently of the other colleges within the university, there is little university-wide policy or ways to achieve it. A Dean's Council was formed to coordinate university-wide decision-making; however, the Council does not operate from formal authority. The case study at Rikkyo University considered the views of full-time faculty. Findings include: the six senates individually and the Deans' Council have more power than the Board of Trustees; the Deans' Council is the locus of university-wide decision-making; in the Deans' Council, consensus must be reached before decisions are made; and it is difficult to achieve consensus within the Deans' Council because faculty members' first loyalty is to their college and only secondarily to the university. Views about the Ministry of Education were also elicited, revealing that a reform movement headed by it would probably be resisted by many. (SW)

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A CASE STUDY OF GOVERNANCE AT RIKKYO UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO, JAPAN:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REFORM OF JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION.

A Paper to be presented by Mary Jane Trout Barretta at the
Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher
Education, Tuesday, November 23, 1987, 3:30 - 5:30 P.M.

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In 1984, Prime Minister Nakasone charged an Ad Hoc Council on Educational Reform with developing a blueprint for Japan's educational system for the 21st century. With respect to higher education, the major policy issues concern (1) efforts to modify the highly competitive university entrance examination system (2) efforts to give students with greater flexibility, making it possible to transfer credits and creating opportunities for life-long learning (3) efforts to make higher education more responsive to the needs of Japanese society, specifically, reducing the tight control the Ministry has over higher education to a more loose coordination by a New University Council. The final report of the Ad Hoc Council was published in August of this year, and the Diet is now considering its recommendation that a New University Council be formed. If this new body is established, it not only will play a key role in the reform of Japanese higher education; it may also have a deep impact on the structure of governance in private universities. To illustrate how problems of reforming Japanese higher education are linked to weaknesses in the organizational framework of governance, this paper will draw on a 1985-86 case study of governance conducted at Rikkyo University, a private university in Tokyo.

The structure of governance in the private Japanese universities is outlined in the School Law of 1947 imposed by the Allied Occupation. After World War II, many Japanese academics argued that, had there been university autonomy and protection of academic freedom, many faculty would have spoken out against the militarism that led Japan into war.¹ The Occupation authorities responded by providing for university autonomy in the School Law. The School Law, which was based on the separate jurisdictions model of governance found in most American colleges and universities at that time, provides for an Academic Senate made up of all full professors to decide all academic matters and for a Board of Trustees to decide all other matters.² In universities with more than one college, each college has its own senate. The School Law permits other decision-making bodies to be established as necessary and in keeping with the academic mission of the institution.

¹William K. Cummings and Amano, Ikuo, "The Changing Role of the Japanese Professor," in Changes in the Japanese University: A Comparative Perspective, ed. William K. Cummings; Amano, Ikuo; and Kitamura, Kazuyuki (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 142 (hereafter cited as Cummings and Amano, "Changing Role of the Japanese Professor").

²Japan, Laws, Statutes, etc. School law of 1947, Section 95

In private universities, administration is placed in the hands of a President elected by the faculty, of the Deans elected by the faculty of their college, and of a small number of faculty appointed to administrative positions by the President. All administrative officers except the President continue to teach full-time. Deans are responsible not only for all administrative matters within their own colleges, but they also must represent their colleges in university-wide decision-making. By the early sixties, there was considerable evidence that this system of governance was not working well.

Specifically, although the university system grew very rapidly in the years following the war, there was almost no change in the governance structure of the universities. For example, Rikkyo University grew from two colleges and a student body of about 1,000 students before the war to six colleges and an enrollment of more than 13,000 students today.³ In the decade of the fifties, as the faculty gained in size, it also gained such strength; and at many private universities, it began to make both academic and non-academic decisions.

One reason why faculty became more powerful than the Trustees has to do with the "gakuin" system which characterizes many of Japan's 309 private institutions. A gakuin is a legally established federation of schools. Rikkyo Gakuin includes an elementary school, a junior high school, a senior high school, and the six colleges of the university, five of which have separate graduate divisions. Although most of the articles of the Rikkyo Constitution have to do with the university, it is not a constitution of the university, but of the Gakuin. The Board of Trustees is for the entire Gakuin, not just for the university. Rikkyo's Constitution requires that there be at least thirteen Trustees: the Chancellor of the Gakuin, the President of Rikkyo University, one Dean from the six colleges of the University, one of the principals of the three schools, the Primate of the Anglican-Episcopal Church of Japan, the Bishop of Tokyo, the President of the Alumni Association, and six faculty members serving on the University Council, an advisory group.⁴ Clearly, faculty dominate its membership since seven of the thirteen Trustees are faculty members...eight including the University President who is elected from among the faculty.

At first, the primary locus of decision-making was meetings of the senates. Since each college had its own senate and each could make its own academic policies, the result was widely different policies from one college to another within the same institution. And, since only full professors were senate members, the decisions and policies which came out of their

³Reverend Kenneth E. Heim. The Story of Rikkyo, 1874-1979. Tokyo, Japan: Rikkyo University, 1979, p. 9.

⁴Rikkyo Gakuin, The Constitution of Rikkyo Gakuin.

deliberations represented the views of senior faculty. In a highly arbitrary process, senates handed down policies and decisions affecting both students and junior faculty with virtually no regard for their views.

With each college acting independently of the other colleges within the university, there was little in the way of university-wide policy nor was there a mechanism to achieve institutional policy. Eventually, a Deans' Council was formed to coordinate university-wide decision-making. As noted before, the School Law permits the establishment of such bodies; but, in the case of Rikkyo, its precise function was never established in the Constitution. Thus, the Deans' Council does not operate from formal authority. Before any decision affecting all the colleges within the university can be made, the matter must be put before the senates of each college. If even one college disagrees with the proposal, it can not be adopted. The Deans can not act independently of their constituencies-- if a Dean personally agrees with a given policy, he can not support that policy within the Deans' Council if it is contrary to the interests of his college. When one college opposes another, a deadlock results and decisions must be deferred. In the case of Rikkyo, a critical issue was how to move part of university to a second campus; but, in twenty years time, the Deans' Council could not agree on a specific plan.

Following the student revolts of the late 1960's and early 1970's, an institute for research in higher education was established at Hiroshima University. In 1973, as its first project the Institute undertook a study of decision-making in both the private and the public universities. The findings indicated broad concern about management and organization within the universities and the need for university reform.⁵ Some reforms of Japanese higher education were undertaken in the 1970's, notably the passage of the Japan Private School Foundation Act which provided funding for private universities, but the basic structure of governance was left untouched. It is true that the membership of the senate was expanded to include associate professors and assistants. However, nothing was done to relieve the heavy administrative burden on the President and the Deans nor to improve the process of University-wide decision-making.

Still another factor that influences governance in Japanese higher education is the Ministry of Education which has responsibility for the standardization and regulation of all levels of the educational system. Throughout the post-war period

⁵Research Institute for Higher Education. Japanese Patterns of Institutional Management in Higher Education: A Final Report on the Institutional Management in Higher Education Project. Hiroshima, Japan: Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, 1976.

there was a constant struggle between the Ministry and university faculty collectively represented by the Japan Teachers' Union.⁶ Part of the conflict is related to the Ministry's tight control over the establishment of new courses and programs. Part of it has to do with faculty resentment at the high percentage of Ministry officials who are graduates of the elite University of Tokyo and who, therefore, do not represent a cross section of Japanese higher education. There also is legacy of distrust that dates back to the 1950's when the Ministry, at the behest of the Occupation authorities, acted to remove faculty who were members of the Democratic Scientists' Society or Minka.⁷ Minka members held a Marxist view of class relations in which university professors were seen as intellectual workers distinct from a ruling class of managers and professionals (i.e. the Ministry). They maintained that faculty would have to engage in militant struggles to improve their working conditions.

The implications for the governance in the reform of higher education concerns the rights of the senates established by law. The senates have zealously guarded the right to design their own entrance examinations, to determine admissions standards and to establish their own regulations. Few Senates have made efforts to allow students to return for specific learning needs, e.g. studying a foreign language, this aspect of education being largely addressed by private enterprises not recognized or regulated by the Ministry. The Ministry has so closely scrutinized and standardized everything that is done within the formal system of education that creativity is stifled and new programs often require many years to implement. As a result, an extensive system of non-formal education has grown up alongside the formal system.

The case study of governance at Rikkyo, patterned after the Hiroshima study, was designed to learn the extent to which faculty participate in university decision-making, faculty attitudes toward governance processes, and problems of governance. In addition to an analysis of the Constitution, structured and unstructured interviews were conducted as was a survey of all full-time faculty.

The major findings were: (1) the six senates individually and the Deans' Council have more power than the Board of Trustees (2) the Deans' Council is the locus of University-wide decision-making (3) in the Deans' Council, which is made up of representatives of each of the Colleges and members of the President's Cabinet, consensus must be reached before decisions are made (4)

⁶Edward R. Beauchamp, "The Development of Japanese Educational Policy, 1945-85" History of Education Quarterly 27 (Fall 1987): 306-307.

⁷ Cummings and Amano, "Changing Role of the Japanese Professor", p. 144.

University Presidents are expected to have a "vision" for the University and to lead the University toward its goals by achieving consensus within the Deans' Council (5) if a President can not achieve consensus, he is expected to resign (5) it is difficult to achieve consensus within the Deans' Council because faculty members' first loyalty is to their College and only secondarily to the University (6) while theoretically, all faculty members participate in University governance, leadership roles are reserved to elders and (7) faculty members express deep concern about the weakness of the Board of Trustees and the inability of the Deans' Council to achieve consensus and move forward in planning.

The study revealed six autonomous colleges loosely coupled together as a university within an even larger federation of schools called the gakuin. None of the Western models of governance (collegial, shared jurisdictions, political, or the garbage can model of organizational choice) adequately described governance at Rikkyo, although aspects of each model could be identified. The analysis of the Rikkyo Gakuin Constitution indicated how the diversity in policies among the six colleges. For example, the Constitution contains specific regulations pertaining to the use of the library in the College of Economics. Rikkyo is "held together" more by traditional loyalties than by an effective administrative structure which can implement university-wide policies. It will be difficult for the New University Council to implement new policy initiatives by entering into dialogue with university administrators since they simply represent their colleges and are not able to make any decisions on their own.

This study pointed to other problems of implementing reforms. For example, like most of Japan's private universities, Rikkyo is "tuition-driven", with nearly 10% of its income derived from entrance examination fees. Private universities may resist any efforts to liberalize the entrance examination system if no other funds are provided to replace sums lost from this source. It also will be difficult to make individual colleges more flexible with respect to the options they offer students. Over half the faculty reported being employed as part-time instructors at other institutions. Many senior faculty report being involved in governance activities for ten hours a week or more. Thus, few faculty will have the time or the energy to develop more flexible programming for students. Also, because faculty are organized into discrete units of academic inquiry and are isolated from colleagues in other disciplines, the development of interdisciplinary programs is unlikely.

The study suggested uneasy relations between the Ministry and academia. In answers to open-ended questions, faculty appeared distrustful of the Ministry, and no doubt many would resist a reform movement headed by it. Although the New University Council might serve as a buffer between the Ministry and academia, the fact that its proposed membership primarily

represents business interests and only a few educators has made Japanese faculty suspicious of its motives. Many fear that university autonomy, including freedom of speech and expression guaranteed in the School Law, is threatened. While nearly all Rikkyo faculty expressed the need more workable system of governance internally, few would go so far as to suggest that the School Law might need to be re-drafted to accomplish this.

The case study points to the flaws in the current system of governance in private universities and may illumine the work of the New University Council in implementing reforms and/or designing a new School Law. The trick will be to guide the overall reform of higher education while at the same time devising a more effective system of governance which protects university autonomy. In its first era of educational reform in the 1870's, Japan looked to the West for educational models as it sought to modernize. Following World War II, there was a second reform of Japanese education in which the American model of governance was imposed. In the educational reform of the 1980's, the proposed New University Council should be viewed as a first step in Japan's attempt to develop a higher education system that takes into account its own culture, the international role Japan is now expected to play, and a vision of the future Japanese society. The New University Council will be expected to develop an Asian model of higher education. The significance of this study lies in the insights it gives to the Japanese higher education reform movement and in the aid it gives American educators as they seek to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the new Japanese model with which they must compete.